



"[air navigation control, [...] is a task involving the exercise of public authority and is not of an economic nature, since that activity constitutes a service in the public interest which is intended to protect both the users of air transport and the populations affected by aircraft flying over them".
(Extract of decision C.364/92 of the European Court of Justice).

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56th ATCEUC Committee Meeting Final Communiqué

On 23rd October 2019 ATCEUC member unions from 26 European countries were welcomed by their Belgian Air Traffic Controller colleagues in Bruges, in the shadow of the many problems they face with their management in Skeyes. ATCEUC has helped ATCOs at the fringes of Europe reach an understanding with their management on the basis of the Toolbox for Successful Social Dialogue, completed with the support of the European Commission. ATCEUC is ready to do so even in the heart of the European Union, provided the required commitment and good faith exists.

Our colleagues in Switzerland are still faced with serious problems after the conviction of an ATCO for an honest mistake during work was upheld by the Swiss Federal Court. ATCEUC fully supports the Joint Just Culture Campaign (JJCC) undertaken by Swiss ATCOs to promote an amendment of the law, to enable Just Culture to thrive again in a state that until recently was exemplary in this respect.

Both of these cases have repercussions around Europe. As shown by the Network Manager Iacopo Prissinotti during the ATCEUC Committee Meeting, ATM operational problems are not merely local anymore, as they have a distributed impact all over the Network. ATCEUC believes that this is true not only for ATM issues, but also for social and judicial ones.

Despite these problems, air traffic controllers around Europe achieved remarkable performance during summer 2019. Safety was maintained and improved while delays were kept at a sustainable level. Great challenges lie ahead though, and the constant hiring of new ATCOs and investment in technology by ANSPs will be required to keep up with the increasing numbers and complexity of air traffic.

The ATSEP Committee Meeting also took place in Bruges and it is encouraging to see the gradual integration of ATSEPs within the ATCEUC structure.

Head of Unit of the SES, Christine Berg described the future of ATM and it is obvious that ATCEUC will need to continue to protect ATCO and ATSEP rights. Being an active partner particularly in defining and implementing a new roadmap on the human and social dimension for SES through the Expert Group on the Human Dimension of the SES (EGHD) and the ATM Social Partners Regulatory Taskforce (ASPReT) is of highest importance.

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